



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

November 5, 2003

H.R. 2304

A bill to resolve boundary conflicts in the vicinity of the Mark Twain National Forest in Barry and Stone counties, Missouri, that resulted from private landowner reliance on a subsequent federal survey

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Agriculture on October 29, 2003

H.R. 2304 would provide a process for the Forest Service and the U.S. Army to resolve boundary disputes with private landowners around the Mark Twain National Forest. The bill would give property owners who have ownership disputes with the two agencies 15 years to notify the federal government of their claims. Upon receipt of a valid claim, the appropriate agency would then either convey the disputed property to the private owners or confirm federal ownership and compensate the private owners for the value of the disputed land. In the first case, the agencies could convey the land without consideration and pay associated administrative costs and reimbursements to the landowner.

Based on information provided by the Forest Service, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 2304 would cost less than \$500,000 annually, assuming the availability of appropriated funds. The claims process that would be established by the legislation could expedite the resolution of ongoing boundary disputes at the Mark Twain National Forest, but the remedies that would be authorized are the same as those that the agencies could provide under existing law. Under the bill, the agencies could incur additional costs to survey disputed tracts and reimburse landowners for their out-of-pocket expenses.

H.R. 2304 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.